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The U.S. Embassy's Information Resource Center (IRC) is pleased to offer you an "Issue-in-Focus" on Democracy and Human Rights.

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International Human Rights Day 2012

DECEMBER 10, 2012

The [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) (UDHR) was adopted on December 10, 1948. The date has since served to mark Human Rights Day worldwide. The Declaration affirms the inalienable rights of people everywhere and upholds basic freedoms like speech, assembly, association, and worship. On Human Rights Day, we recognize the important contributions of human rights defenders who risk harassment, beatings, detention, imprisonment and even death for practicing or even seeking to secure fundamental freedoms.

This year, the spotlight is on the rights of all people — women, youth, minorities, persons with disabilities, indigenous people, the poor and marginalized — to make their voices heard in public life and be included in political decision-making.

SPECIAL MESSAGES ON INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY FROM U.S. GOVERNMENT

[Statement by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton](#) (December 10, 2012) - "We seek to protect these rights at home and advocate for them abroad because doing so is central to our identity, a source of our influence in the world, and essential to our national interests. As President Obama and I have said, governments that respect human rights and reflect the will of their people are more stable, secure and prosperous over the long run, and better allies for the United States."

[Statement by Ambassador Susan E. Rice, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, on International Human Rights Day](#) (December 10, 2012) - "Today, we pledge to live up to Eleanor Roosevelt's inspirational example, for in far too many places human freedoms are still denied. As long as a family anywhere is tormented by a state-sanctioned killer; a peaceful agitator is hounded by a violent brigade; an artist is locked away for expressing what she thinks; an LGBT individual is harassed because of whom he or she loves; a community is beleaguered because of how it worships; a person with a disability is marginalized by those who ignore plain injustice; or a girl is threatened for having the audacity to pick up a book; all of our rights have been violated."

U.S. HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITMENTS AND PLEDGES

[Video Remarks for "Stand Up for Malala-Stand Up for Girls's Right to Education" by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton](#) (December 10, 2012) - "But all over the world, girls still face enormous obstacles to an education. In fact, most of the children who are not in school are girls. And the numbers are especially high in developing countries and countries torn apart by conflict. That's why the United States is supporting the UN Secretary General's Education First initiative and the goals of Education for All, so that more girls receive a quality education, and become active citizens in their societies."

[Remarks by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton on Frontlines and Frontiers: Making Human Rights a Human Reality](#) (December 6, 2012) - "Now, human rights don't always occupy the headlines, but they are often what lie just behind and underneath them. And the future that awaits the students and young people today will be shaped, in large part, by how well leaders live up to their human rights responsibilities."

[Celebrating Human Rights Day by Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, Michael H. Posner](#) (December 10, 2012) - "Regardless of gender, race, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, or physical or mental disability, all people deserve the freedom to pursue happiness and fulfillment, to speak openly, to...organize peacefully, to believe and worship as they see fit, and to participate fully in the public life of society with confidence in the rule of law."

PHOTO GALLERIES

- [Thoughts on Human Rights](#)
- [The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Part I](#)
- [The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Part II](#)
- [The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Part III](#)
- [Evolution of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)

ONLINE PUBLICATIONS

- Book: [Women in the World Today](#)
- eJournal: [Celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)
- eJournal: [Cultivating Civil Society 2.0](#)

USEFUL WEBSITES

- Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, U.S. Department of State - [HumanRights.gov](#)
- Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations Human Rights - [OHCR.org](#)

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